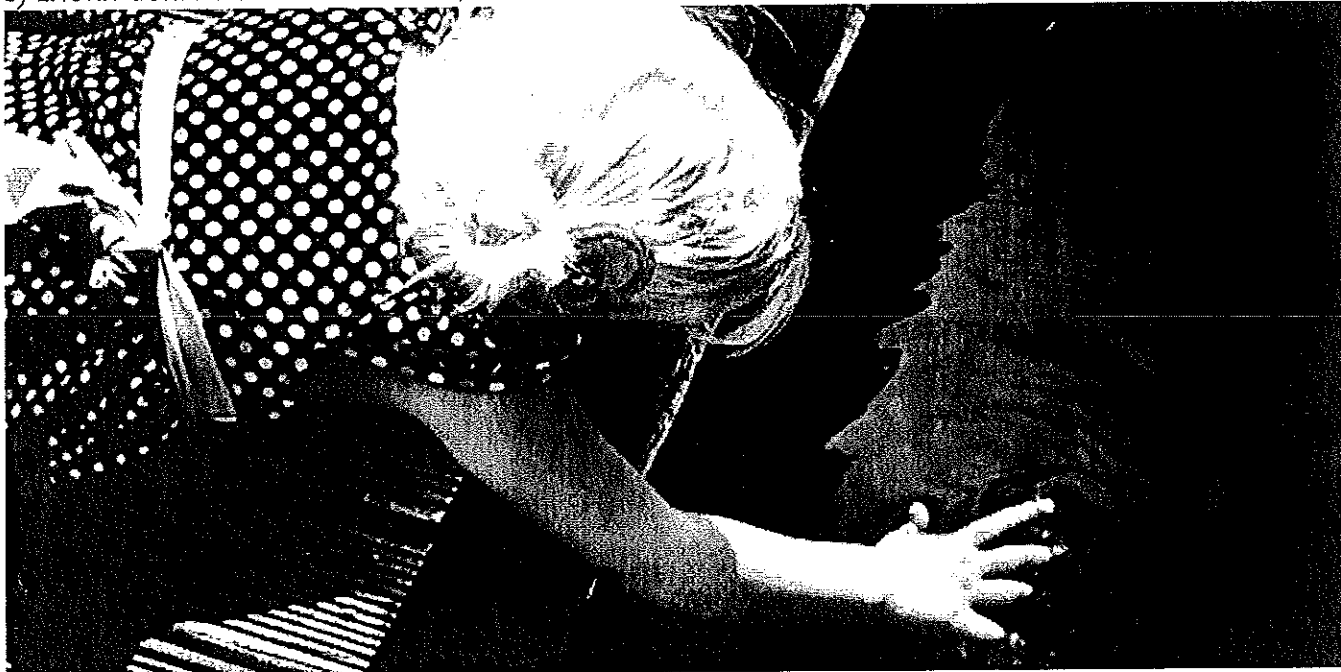


## Why Character Education?

by LAURA GURLEY on NOVEMBER 11, 2011



Why should a teacher spend valuable class time on character education when students aren't held responsible for things like kindness, respect, or integrity on those ever-pressing end of year state tests

I get it. *I do.* A teacher is overwhelmed with pressure to barrel through curriculum and oftentimes it leaves little room for intentional instruction on the unseen and un-tested character of the students. Below I make a case for why character education warrants some space in every teacher's classroom, anyway:

Our deeds determine *us*, as much as we determine our deeds. — george eliot

Our character is what we do when we think no one is looking. — h. jackson brown, jr.

### Why Every Teacher Should Teach Character

1. **Kids Might Not Be Getting It at Home.** Despite the idea that teaching character is really the parent's job, to be played out in the confines of the home, the reality is that many children do not have parents that are intentionally challenging them to live lives of kindness and integrity. With work schedules

and after school activities, sometimes the time spent with a teacher is longer during the weekdays than the time spent with a parent, anyway, and so the importance of using those hours to teach things that really matter increases.

To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society. -  
theodore roosevelt

It takes a whole village to raise a child. — ashanti proverb

**2. Character Education Builds Relationships.** When students have the space to engage with each other and with a teacher about things of real life beyond math facts and grammar rules, relationships are built within the classroom. Students hear each other's stories, think about their lives, challenge the status quo, and grow more connected to the others in the learning environment. This not only has benefits socially and personally for students, but it also increases the effectiveness of classroom management.

**3. Character Education Creates Positive School Environments.** When classrooms are intentionally engaged in discussions and activities about a person's character, the entire school begins to have a more positive atmosphere. Students feel more connected with each other, and teacher-student relationships are strengthened. Character education allows teachers to share life experience, rather than only book experience.

Most people say that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong: it is character. — Albert Einstein

Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike. — teddy roosevelt

**4. Character Education is Easy.** Character education doesn't mean hours of research of lesson plans. It can be as simple as 5 minutes at the beginning of class to discuss a meaningful quote or a half an

hour on Fridays to share an inspirational video. Rest assured, it could easily become the highlight of your teaching week, without a great amount of effort from you to plan. {See the bottom of this post for some valuable free resources and lesson plans.}

**5. Teaching Character Can Change the World.** The students in your classroom will be the adults who shape our society in future years. And while it is important that they graduate intellectually educated, the value of your students becoming citizens who interact in the world with kindness, respect, integrity, and moral behavior is perhaps even more important.

**In challenging and inspiring students to be positive forces in their society, you as a teacher are changing the course of the next generation.** And that's worth a few minutes of instructional time, in the very least.

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